

"Who blessed mankind and humanised the world."

"The mighty dead"

THE CHRISTIAN FREEMAN

AND

# Record of Unitarian Worthies

BEING A HISTORY OF THE UNITARIAN REFORMATION OF RELIGION IN EUROPE AND AMERICA  
DURING THE LAST THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS.

With some Account of the most Notable Works written by Unitarians.

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## THE DESERT ISLAND.

### AN ALLEGORY.

"We take no note of time but from its loss,  
To give it then a tongue is wise in man."

A RICH and benevolent man, wishing to make one of his slaves happy, presented him with his liberty and a ship fully equipped and loaded with costly merchandise. "Go," said he, "sail to a foreign country, trade with these goods, and all profit shall be thine." The slave departed. He was but a few days upon the sea when a violent storm arose, dashed the ship against a rock and wrecked it. The merchandise sunk in the ocean, all of his companions perished, and with the greatest difficulty he succeeded in reaching the shore of an island. Hungry, naked, without help, and weeping over his misfortunes, he entered deep into the country. From afar he perceived a great city, out of which, with great clamour, came a multitude of people to meet him. "Hail to our king!" they cried, as they accosted him; and seating him upon a magnificent chariot, drove him into the city, to a kingly palace, where they clothed him with a purple mantle, placed a diadem upon his brow, and caused him to ascend a golden throne. The nobles gathering about him fell down upon their knees and swore to him, in the name of the people, the oath of faithfulness.

The new king, at the commencement of all this splendour, believed it to be a beautiful dream, until the continuation of his good fortune no longer permitted him to doubt that the wonderful adventure was true. "I cannot conceive," he reflected, "what has enchanted the eyes of this strange people, that they should make a naked stranger their king. They know not who I am; ask not from whence I come, and place me upon their throne. What a peculiar custom!"

So thought he, and became so anxious to know the cause of his elevation, that he determined to ask the solution of the riddle of one of the nobles of his court, who appeared to him to be a wise man. "Vizier," he added, "why have you made me your king? How could you know that I had arrived upon your shores, and what will finally become of me?" "Sire," answered the vizier, "this island is inhabited by spirits. For a long time they have prayed to the Almighty to send yearly a son of Adam to govern them. The Almighty accepted their prayer, and causes each year, upon the same day, a man to land upon their island. The inhabitants hasten to meet him, and joyfully recognise him as their sovereign. But his government lasts but one year. The appointed day again appearing, they deprive him of his kingly ornaments, and clothe him in a mean dress. His servants forcibly carry him to the shore, lay him in a peculiarly constructed vessel, which takes him to another island. The island is a desert and desolate. He, who was a powerful king a few days ago, arrives here naked, and finds neither subjects nor friends. No one commiserates his misfortune, and he is obliged to lead a sad and sorrowful life in this desert country, if he has not wisely made use of his year. After the banishment of the old king, the people go to this new one, that the Almighty, in His providence, sends every year without exception. In the customary manner they meet and receive him with joy, as the last. This, also, sire, is an eternal law of this kingdom, that no king during his reign can resign."

"Were my predecessors," asked the king further, "also informed of the short duration of their elevation?"

"To none of them was the law of transitoriness unknown; but some permitting themselves to become blinded by the



splendours which surrounded their throne, forgot the sad future, and spent the year without acting wisely. Others, intoxicated by the sweetness of their good fortune, and out of fear to embitter the enjoyment of the present, would not permit themselves to reflect upon the desert island, and so staggered, like drunkards, out of one pleasure into another, until their time was up and they were to be cast into the vessel. When the day came they all lamented their fascination, but it was then too late, and they were, without forbearance, delivered to the misery which awaited them, and which they had not been willing to prevent through wisdom."

The narrative of the spirit filled the king with fear. He shuddered with horror at the fate of the preceding kings, and wished to escape their unhappiness. With feelings of terror he saw that many weeks of his short time had already flown, and that he must haste to make better use of the remaining days of his reign.

"Wise Vizier," said he to the spirit, "thou hast disclosed to me my eternal fate and the short duration of my kingly power, but I pray thee, tell me also what I must do if I wish to avoid the misery of my predecessors."

"Remember, sire," answered the spirit, "that thou hast arrived naked upon our island, for even so shalt thou leave it, and never return. There is, therefore, only one possible expedient to prevent the unhappiness which threatens in that country of banishment. Make it fruitful, and supply it with inhabitants. This is permitted by our laws, and thy subjects are so obedient to thee, that they will go wherever thou wishest to send them. Therefore send workmen thither, and change the barren fields to fruitful ones; build cities and fill their granaries with provisions. In a word, prepare thyself a new kingdom, the inhabitants of which, after thy banishment, will receive thee with joy. But hasten, permit not a moment to pass idly, for the time is short, and the more thou doest to building of thy future dwelling, the happier will be thy residence there. Think, thy year is rapidly passing, make use of thy liberty, as one flying from destruction. If thou despisest my advice or delayest, thou art lost, and prolonged misery is thy fate."

The king was a wise man, and the speech of the spirit gave wings to his resolution and activity. He immediately sent thither a multitude of subjects. They went with

joy, and zealously laid hold of the work.

Soon the island began to be embellished. Before six moons had passed, cities stood upon its blooming pastures. Notwithstanding which, the king did not abate in his zeal. He continued sending thither more inhabitants. Those following were still more joyful than the first, since they went to a country well cultivated and inhabited by their friends and relations. Meanwhile the end of the year drew near. The last king had trembled with fear at the approach of this moment. This one awaited it with a calm feeling of pleasure, for he was going to a country where, through his wise activity, he had constructed for himself a lasting dwelling.

Finally, the appointed day appeared. The king was seized in his palace, deprived of his diadem and kingly apparel, and placed in the inevitable vessel which was to guide him to his place of exile. Scarcely had he landed upon the shore of the new island when the inhabitants hurried with joy to meet him. They received him with honour. Instead of that crown which humanity endured only for a year, they adorned his head with an unfading wreath of flowers. The Almighty rewarded his wisdom. He gave to him the immortality of his subjects and made him their eternal king.

The rich and benevolent man is God: the slave whom his master sent away is man at his birth; the island where he landed is the world; the inhabitants who come joyfully to meet him are the parents, who take care of the naked and weeping infant; the vizier who warns him of his sad fate which awaits him is Wisdom. The year of his reign is the life of man, and the desert island, whither he is approaching, the future world. The kings, however, who have gone before him, without reflecting upon the unhappiness which threatened them, are those foolish men who occupy themselves only with worldly joys, without thinking of the life after death. They are punished with future misery, because they appear before the throne of the Almighty with their hands empty of all good works.

You see, therefore, that man is judged through his works and not through faith alone. Our only safety and our everlasting happiness depend on the wise employment of our time. We can lay up for ourselves at the close of the present life bitter regrets, or, by virtuous deeds, treasures in heaven.—*Translated from the German.*



## THE OLD COUPLE.

It stands in a sunny meadow,  
The house so mossy and brown ;  
With its cumbrous, old, stone chimneys,  
And the gray roof sloping down.

The trees fold their green arms around it,  
The trees a century old ;  
And the winds go chanting through them,  
And the sun-beams drop their gold.

The cowslips spring in the marshes,  
And the roses bloom on the hill ;  
And beside the brook on the pastures,  
The herds go feeding at will.

The children have gone and left them,  
They sit in the sun alone !  
And the old wife's tears are falling,  
As she harks to the well-known tone,

That won her heart in her girlhood,  
That has soothed her in many a care,  
And praises her now for the brightness  
Her old face used to wear.

She thinks again of her bridal —  
How, dressed in her robe of white,  
She stood by her gay young lover  
In the morning's rosy light.

Oh, the morning is rosy as ever,  
But the rose from her cheek has fled ;  
And the sunshine still is golden,  
But it falls on a silvered head.

And the girlhood dreams, once vanished,  
Come back in her winter-time,  
Till her feeble pulses tremble  
With the thrill of spring-time's prime.

And looking forth from the window,  
She thinks how the trees have grown,  
Since, clad in her bridal whiteness,  
She crossed the old door-stone.

Though dimmed her eye's bright azure,  
And dimmed her hair's young gold ;  
The love in her girlhood plighted,  
Has never grown dim nor old.

They sat in peace in the sunshine,  
Till the day was almost done ;  
And then, at its close, an angel  
Stole over the threshold stone.

He folded their hands together—  
He touched their eyelids with balm ;  
And their last breath floated upward  
Like the close of a solemn psalm.

Like a bridal pair they traversed  
The unseen, mystical road  
That leads to the beautiful city,  
"Whose builder and maker is God."

Perhaps in that miracle country  
They will give her lost youth back ;  
And the flowers of a vanished spring-time  
Will bloom in the spirit's track.

One draught from the living waters  
Shall call back his manhood's prime ;  
And eternal years shall measure  
The love that outlived time.

But the shapes that they left behind them,  
The wrinkles and silver hair,  
Made holy to us by the kisses  
The angel had painted there.

We will hide away 'neath the willows,  
When the day is low in the west ;  
Where the sunbeams cannot find them,  
Nor the winds disturb their rest.

And we'll suffer no tell-tale tombstone,  
With its age and date to rise  
O'er the two who are old no longer  
In the Father's House in the skies.

## SIR PHILIP FRANCIS ON CHRISTIANITY.

The internal evidence of the Christian religion is greater than the external. In the matter of external evidence other religions may compete with the Christian, but in purity, wisdom, and power of cleansing the human heart, it is alike original and supreme. One of its great characteristics is its opposition to the monster vices of humanity. What a lesson for the arrogant and proud man is the constant humility and gentleness of the Saviour, who when most asserting his power calls himself the *Son of Man* ! Surely there must be some mysterious reason for this. There is nothing like it to be found in the founder of any other religion on earth.

The doctrines of Christ were eminently of the practical kind. He prescribes no forms, no prayers but one, no articles of belief except the Divine authority for his mission. The favourite dogma that good works must follow faith is contrary not only to the express declaration of Christ, but to all human experience. He says : "Let a man do the work that I command, and then he shall know my mission is from above." The line—

"He can't be wrong whose life is in the right," is more truly Gospel language than all the Methodistical books ever written. But then it is much easier to cry "Lord, Lord !" than to do his will. It is pleasanter to talk and teach and dictate than to prefer principle to interest, overcome your passions, look out for the oppressed, the poor, and the miserable to investigate their woes. Mankind is ever inclined to go into those extremes which the Divine wisdom saw was not good for them. Every Church has added something to the simplicity of Christianity, thus assuming itself to be wiser than the great Founder. This disregard for the most obvious and imperative of Christian principles has prevented their diffusion and limited their effect on human conduct.

I regret not having given more time to the study of Christianity, but I have lived in the world and for the world, endeavouring to prevent some evils and to do my fellow-creatures some service. What I know of religion I have acquired by reading the Scriptures in the spirit of sincerity and with a desire to comprehend their meaning. I take their obvious sense without prejudice, as far as a man can be without prejudice, for I have no systems to found, no sects to defend.

I have more real religion than any man I know. I do not pretend to more than I have, and so mock my Creator. There are many points on which all I can say is *I do not know*—and would not every sincere man say the same ? If no man pretended to more religion than he has, what he has would have more effect on his moral conduct. A consciousness of hypocrisy degrades the whole man, for when a man affects religious conviction for worldly purposes his honesty is soon undermined, and thus the hypocrite becomes a rogue.



## WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

THE WORLD THAT CONQUERS FAITH.—The *Examiner* says of the Archbishops of York and Canterbury, "Although both have a faith that would remove mountains, the zeal of the one is tempered by fifteen thousand a year, and that of the other by ten!" They have not the faith that conquers the world; the world conquers their faith.

SABBATARIANISM INDEED.—One of our Broad Church clergyman, being recently on an excursion in Scotland, was vehemently rebuked by his landlady for taking a walk on Sunday afternoon. The clergyman said that he could not see the harm, and said: "You know that we read that our Lord himself walked with his disciples in the fields on the Sabbath day." "Ay," said the old lady, "ay I ken it, an' I neer thoct any the better o' him for it, neither."

AN ORDINATION PRAYER.—A negro missionary repeated to Sir Charles Lyell, the geologist, the following prayer offered by a negro preacher at the ordination of another negro preacher; the language is as terse and comprehensive as it is singular to us. "Make he good like he say. Make he say like he good. Make he say, make he good, like he God!" That is, "Make him as good as he preaches. Make his preaching as good as himself. Make his preaching, make himself, as good as God!"

ATHEISTIC FRUITS.—Our English Comtastes and Atheists, now and then, boast of the progress of unbelief in France, especially among the male population of Paris. We may take the following as some evidence, that Atheism and selfishness walk hand in hand. The *Daily News* correspondent in his disquisitions of the burning of the old Opera-house says, "The first impulse of a Parisian, when a fire alarm given is to hide himself lest the police should require his services. Last night not more than thirty men unconnected with the Fire Bridge could be laid hold of by the authorities, though when the alarm was given at a quarter to twelve the Boulevards were crowded with people returning home from cafés and theatres." This selfish and cowardly spirit, is a greater calamity to Paris, than the destruction of ten thousand houses. Alas! for a people that denies God and says it can do better without the Christian Religion.

A BISHOP'S OPINION ABOUT CHANNING.—"Deep and radical and far-searching are the differences between the dogmatic creed of my own Church (to which I am firmly attached) and that of the great American, whose name I am about to mention. But if I were asked who, above all the inspired sons of men, has most contributed to raise the hearts and the minds of men against the hideous crime and blunder of unnecessary war; if I were asked who had prepared the heart of the human race for a period, perhaps almost indefinitely distant, yet marked alike by the glorious anticipations of prophecy and by the sure calculations of political and social science; if I were asked to name the man who, above others, has shown his fellow man that the most abject creature who is crouching in any home as a slave is, after all, a person and not a thing, with the rights and prospects of immortality; a man in honouring whom you honour yourself, and in degrading whom you degrade yourself; if I were asked to name that man, I should name, with all confidence and honesty, William Ellery Channing."—*Birk p of Derry*.

DEATH BED REPENTANCE.—Lully, the composer, was dangerously ill. A confessor told him there was only one way, by which he could obtain absolution, and that was by burning all he had composed of an unpublished opera. Lully burnt his music. On his recovery a nobleman said, "You have burnt your opera; and you are really a blockhead." "Stop, my friend, stop," said Lully, whispering in his ear; "I knew very well what I was about; I have another copy."

A HEARTY RECEPTION.—One Sunday, during high mass at twelve, in the village of Glentarriff, Ireland, three ladies of the Protestant faith were obliged to take shelter from one of the heavy showers which frequently occur in the south of Ireland. The officiating priest, knowing who they were, and wishing to appear respectful to them, stooped down to his attendant, who was on his knees, and whispered to him, "Three chairs for the Protestant ladies." The clerk, who was rather an ignorant man, stood up and shouted, "Three cheers for the Protestant ladies," which the congregation immediately took up, and gave very heartily, while the priest stood dumfounded.

INDIVIDUAL POWER.—Ideas that sway the world are born of heroic souls, and uttered by individual lips. Great thoughts that have been the axles of society, on which nations poised and swung around, first sprang from single hearts. No army delivered the old Hebrews from bondage, but one man, Moses, did. No senate or statesman raised Israel to its height of unmatched national grandeur, but one kingly man, David, did. No school of divines first gave us the English Bible, but John Wickliffe did. No royal court discovered America, but Christopher Columbus did. No circle of social science interpreted the laws of the universe, but Galileo did. No sovereign or Parliament saved English liberties, but Oliver Cromwell did. No combination or confederacy rescued Scotland from political and ecclesiastical enemies, but John Knox did.

EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE DIFFICULTIES.—Our erring brethren of the above name, who from the first have excluded Unitarians, find their difficulties every year increasing. At Geneva, the other year, they felt how hard it was to keep out Unitarians, who had kindly placed the largest building of Geneva at their service. This year, at New York, the German Lutheran Church was admitted to the Alliance, while it was known that the views of a vast number of them are identical with both Universalists and Unitarians. We may rejoice the light is getting in, though only through small holes; the day will come when this partition wall will all be thrown down, and every one who professes to be a Christian will be welcome to the Christian Alliance, for that will be its name.

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